

A D E L A I D E F E S T I V A L 2 0 2 6



AF26 DIGITAL DAYBILL

POV

re:group performance collective

Dates: Wed 4 Mar – Sun 8 Mar

Venue: Space Theatre

Duration: 1hr 20mins, no interval

Credits

Text by Mark Rogers

Directed by Solomon Thomas

Performers

Yuna Ahn

Grace Tione

Unrehearsed Adult Actors

Chris Asimos

Emma Beech

Tilda Cobham-Hervey

Matt Crook

Elizabeth Hay

Ashton Malcolm

Renato Musolino

Hew Parham

Astrid Pill

James Smith

Ellen Steele

Stephen Tongan

Creative Team

Mark Rogers

Solomon Thomas

Malcolm Whittaker

Steve Wilson-Alexander

Carly Young

Sound Designer Ashley Bundang

Creative Producer Malcolm Whittaker

Administration Intimate Spectacle

Images Taylah Chapman

Acknowledgements

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A Message from the Creators

Writer's Note

Onstage tonight you will see two adults talking with a child about mental health. The adults will be unprepared and unrehearsed. The child will guide them through the experience, in charge and in control. How often is it like this? How often do children have the space and agency to be in charge on these topics? To run things, set the scene, call the shots?

In our show, Bub is a documentary filmmaker, making a documentary about her family. But it's about our families too. There is no family, no person, unaffected by the complex, intersecting issues of mental health and wellbeing. In making the show, our challenge was to talk about this difficult topic in a way that was safe for a young person, that adhered to Live Performance Australia's Guidelines for Child Safety and that two adult actors could make their way through without rehearsal.

We've made the show this way because in real life we are rarely prepared. These conversations are always fraught, makeshift and done under pressure. We didn't want to write ABOUT these conversations, we wanted to HAVE these conversations.

We hope the show encourages more of them.

Mark Rogers

Director's Note

My mum has bipolar. But this show isn't about her or me directly. Maybe the show is like a letter from me to her. Or a letter from old me to young me and my sisters. Or a letter from me to my mum through Mark. Or from me to a young kid who is going through what we went through. But none of us are represented in it. We are represented through it, through a young person trying to grapple with big ideas.

It's a very messy thing to talk about. A parent being mentally unwell. I still struggle with it. But I have always thought that young people seem to be able to deal with these ideas as well as adults, and sometimes even better. A young person's capacity for empathy and care always astounds me.

Mark came to me a few years ago with an idea. What if we did a show with just a kid on stage. Trust them with a whole show.

Give them all the support re:group can offer, but let them do the whole thing. An hour-long monologue by a single child on stage. I was sold.

I think that trust is the principal focus of our process of making *POV*. Trusting that the young person can do this, trusting they can learn their lines, trusting them to deal with the emotional weight of the show and trusting them to artfully boss two new adult actors around each night.

Through this work, I hope we have found a way for there to be a real conversation between a child and an adult onstage.

It couldn't all be scripted. We had to leave it open for a real moment to happen in the theatre. That's our take on the idea of a documentary.

Solomon Thomas

About re:group:

re:group performance collective is Mark Rogers, Solomon Thomas, Malcolm Whittaker, Steve Wilson-Alexander and Carly Young. We are a group of friends based between Sydney and Wollongong NSW who create work by engaging other friends on a project-by-project basis.

Inspired by the highs and lows of pop culture, we mash theatre and movie making together to create 'live cinema'. Our aim is to turn the typically comfortable and passive movie-going experience into something immersive, irreverent, sweaty and live. We are passionate about creating innovative work that questions the role and meaning of art in society, where the technology we use is core to the ideas in each work we make, which is ironic and sincere, and accessible and experimental, all in equal measure.

POV is the latest work that captures re:group's interest in inhabiting and remaking popular cinematic forms for a theatre context. Following sci-fi (*UFO*, Griffin 2023) and nostalgic indie movie (*Coil*, Opera House 2022 and a 2023 national tour), *POV* centres the least fashionable and most maligned aspect of documentary filmmaking – the dramatic re-enactment.

Artist Biographies

Mark Rogers

Mark Rogers is a multi-award-winning playwright, screenwriter and theatre-maker who lives on Dharawal Land. In 2019, he won both Sydney Theatre Company's Patrick White Award and the Griffin Award for New Australian Writing for his play *Superheroes*. His play *Naked & Screaming* won Best Production at the 2022 Matilda Awards. He was recently awarded Screen NSW's Short To Feature Fast Track Initiative for a new project with director and co-writer Aaron Lucas. This year, he was selected to participate in PLATFORM:LABS - an initiative for emerging filmmakers run by For Film's Sake in partnership with the Sydney Film Festival. His work as a playwright includes: *Naked & Screaming* (La Boite Theatre), *Superheroes* (Griffin Theatre Company), *The Pecking Order* (Shopfront Arts Co-Op, Commission), *Tom William Mitchell* (Merrigong-X), *Plastic* (Old 505 Theatre), *We'll Become Good People, You'll See* (Crack Theatre Festival), *Target Audience* (Novelty UK), *The Buck* (Rock Surfers, Bondi Feast), *Soothsayers* (Brisbane Festival: Under The Radar), *Blood Pressure* (Rock Surfers, Old Fitzroy Theatre) and *Gobbledygook* (PACT, AC Arts Adelaide). He holds a PHD from the University of Wollongong.

Solomon Thomas

Solomon Thomas is a theatre-maker, video designer and performer currently based in Sydney. He graduated with BCA Honours in Performance from the University of Wollongong in 2013. For the past ten years Solomon has been actively engaged in creating and performing work for both independent and main stage theatre. He is a core member of re:group performance collective, Monday Night Cards and Woodcourt Art Theatre. Beyond re:group, his collaborations include *Jackson! Le Diner Est Pret!* (Woodcourt Art Theatre, 2013), *The Encounter* (Adelaide Fringe, 2014; La Mama, 2016), *The Face Show* (Shopfront Art Co- Op, 2014), *Kraken Play* (Crack Theatre Festival, 2017), *Spacejunk* (Sydney Observatory, 2018), *Lifestyles of the Richard and Family* (Next Wave, 2018), *Sex Magick* (Griffin Theatre, 2023). Solomon has worked as a performer on Nick Cave's *Heard* (Carriageworks, 2016), My Darling Patricia's *The Piper* (Sydney Festival, 2014; Edinburgh Fringe, 2015) and in development with Branch Nebula, Studio A and Erth. Solomon is currently a core-artist and puppeteer with Erth Visual & Physical Inc (2014-24) and has toured with them throughout the UAE, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and Japan.

Malcom Whittaker

Malcom Whittaker works as an artist, writer, researcher, performer, producer and teacher. He does this in solo pursuits and in collaborations with other artists and non-artists. His projects have taken the form of theatre and gallery situations, site-specific and public interventions, performance lectures, film shoots, phone calls, support groups, radio programs, elevator rides, teeth-brushing services, walks in the park, games of chess, gift shops, handshakes, newspapers, fashion labels, letters in the mail, digging holes in the dirt and the borrowing of books from the library. He has made and presented work extensively across Australia, as well as in the UK, Finland and Europe. He holds a PhD from The University of Wollongong, where he also works as a sessional teacher.

Steve Wilson-Alexander

Steve Wilson-Alexander is a theatre-maker living on Dharawal land in Wollongong. He is a founding member of re:group performance collective and FAST PRINCESS, the latter being the resident film-making collective at Cerebral Palsy Alliance 2016-18. He was Youth Artist in Residence at Wollongong Youth Centre 2012, a member of PACT Collective 2015, a part of International Visiting Artists Week at Back to Back 2017, and a participant of the Artist Farm residency at The Theatre Practice, Singapore in 2018. He worked on Ben Tre Festival of the Coconut and Hue Festival in 2012, and Santiago A Mil International Theatre Festival in 2019. Theatre works with re:group include *Route Dash Niner* at Merrigong Theatre Company (2016-2017) and the national tour of *Coil* (2022-2023).

Carly Young

Carly Young is a theatre-maker and producer living on Dharawal land. As a founding member and artist in re:group performance collective, she has created film, video, and performance works across Australia and internationally. Key projects include *Coil* national tour (2022 - 2023), *Route Dash Niner: Part 1* and *Route Dash Niner: Part 2* for Merrigong Theatre Company, Wollongong (2016-2017), *Hotel Obscura* with Triage, Die Fabrikanten, Mezzanine Spectacles & Ohi Pezoume at FAI AR, Marseille (2015); *LOVELY* at PACT, Sydney (2014), *Carly and Troy do 'A Doll's House'* at Crack Theatre Festival, Newcastle (2013), Adelaide Fringe Festival (2014), You Are Here Festival, Canberra (2014), La Mama Theatre, Melbourne (2016); and durational performance work *YOWZA YOWZA YOWZA* with Deborah Pollard for Performance Space at the University of Wollongong (2014). Carly works as a creative producer across visual arts, music and theatre, and was an inaugural participant in *All The Things We Couldn't Say*, a three-year collaboration between Salamanca Arts Centre in Australia, and Checkpoint Theatre in Singapore.

